

on to reduce Suffolk, entered Bury St. Edmunds on the 23rd with little opposition, and at once held assizes in the town.¹ This opened the line of communication between Bishop Spencer in Norfolk and the King in Essex. The royal head-quarters were moved up in the train of the armies, on June 26 to the palace at Havering-atte-Bower, and on July 2 to Chelmsford, where he issued a charter revoking the manumission made at Mile End. During these weeks the sword and the rope were busy at work. Many were stabbed by the soldiers in the brakes and thickets, and left lying where they fell. Chief Justice Tressilian's severities won him an unenviable fame, not only with the peasantry, but with some of the more discriminating among the friends of order. It was said that he spared none who came before him for trial. He seemed to feel that he was revenging his profession and his murdered predecessor for all they had suffered in the rebellion. Hanging, quartering, disembowelling, went on apace. As good an opportunity was afforded to private vengeance and malice by the license of the informer and the credulity of the courts, as had been lately supplied by the disorder of the country. The impolicy of this indiscriminate slaughter, which afterwards did not escape comment, caused fresh risings, only to be suppressed with fresh cruelties.²

It may be plausibly argued that the country needed a lesson in the penalties of riot and rebellion, which had so long been in abeyance. But the State erred on the side of severity, and this mistake was the more unpardonable, because it exposed the rulers to the odious charge of bad faith. They had persuaded the peasants to leave London by charters not only of manumission but of pardon. Such professions may possibly have been the only way of saving the State. Princes have often thought so.

Have we not fingers to write,
Lips to swear at a need ?
Then, when danger decamps,
Bury the word with the deed.*

¹ Powell, 25.

² Knighton, ii. 150 ; Higden, ix. 6-9 ; *Cambridge University Library MSS.*
Ee. iv. 32, 2, p. 176.

³ Swinburne, *A Watch in the Night*.